UNITED NATIONS

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General Assembly

Distr.
LIMITED

A/C.2/47/L.85
10 December 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-seventh session
SECOND COMMITTEE
Agenda item 79

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Conference on straddling and highly migratory fish stocks

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.62

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

A. Requests contained in the draft resolution

1. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 1 to 14 of draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.62, the General Assembly would:

(a) Decide to convene in 1993, in accordance with the mandate agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, an intergovernmental conference under United Nations auspices on straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, which should complete its work in advance of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly and take into account relevant activities at the subregional, regional and global levels, with a view to promoting effective implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks. The conference, drawing, inter alia, on scientific and technical studies by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), would:

(i) Identify and assess existing problems related to the conservation and management of such fish stocks;

(ii) Consider means of improving fisheries cooperation among States;

(iii) Formulate appropriate recommendations;

(b) Request the Secretary-General to invite to the conference those listed in paragraph 9 of Assembly resolution 46/168 and in decision 46/469 and also to invite regional and subregional fisheries organizations to attend as observers;

(c) Decide that in 1993 the conference would hold at United Nations Headquarters an organizational session of up to five days for the purposes of electing its bureau and organizing its work, and a three-week session in July to deal with substantive matters;

(d) Request the Secretary-General to make appropriate secretariat arrangements;

(e) Request the Secretary-General to prepare draft rules of procedure for the consideration of the conference at its organizational session;

(f) Decide to establish a voluntary fund for the purpose of assisting developing States, especially those most concerned by the subject-matter of the conference, in particular the least developed among them, to participate fully and effectively in the conference, and invite Governments and regional economic integration organizations to contribute to the fund;

(g) Decide that the funds necessary for the preparatory process and the conference itself should, subject to the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolutions 40/243, 41/213, and 42/211, be made available within the programme budget without adversely affecting other ongoing activities and without prejudice to the provision of extrabudgetary resources;

(h) Invite relevant specialized agencies, particularly FAO and other appropriate organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as regional and subregional fisheries organizations, to contribute with relevant scientific and technical studies and reports and to organize regional and subregional technical meetings in order to contribute to the work of the conference;

(i) Invite relevant non-governmental organizations from developed and developing countries to contribute within the areas of their competence and expertise to the conference on the basis of procedures of their accreditation used in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

(j) Request the Secretary-General to submit a report on the work of the conference to the Assembly at its forty-eighth session;

(k) Request the Secretary-General to bring the resolution to the attention of all members of the international community and organizations concerned.

B. Relationship of the requests to the approved programme of work

2. The proposed activities would fall under programme 10 (Law of the sea and ocean affairs), subprogramme 1 (Promoting uniform and consistent application of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and providing advice and information to States), of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. 1/ Related resources were initially programmed and approved under section 10, subprogramme 1, of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993. 2/ Following the restructuring of the Secretariat, proposals for the transfer of programmes and resources from section 10 to section 38 have been submitted to the General Assembly in the Secretary-General's revised estimates (A/C.5/47/2 and Corr.1).

C. Activities by which the requests would be implemented

3. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would undertake the necessary preparations to convene an intergovernmental conference in 1993.

4. The Secretary-General would assign responsibility for the conference to the Office of Legal Affairs, including its Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. The Office of Legal Affairs, through that Division, would undertake consultations with all departments and offices concerned and, as appropriate, with other organizations of the United Nations system, in particular FAO.

5. Basic working papers would be prepared, on such topics as the international legal aspects of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks, taking into account the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and on scientific and technical studies of such stocks.

6. Arrangements would be made to obtain the necessary technical support from FAO. In this regard, the Council on Fisheries of FAO, at its recently concluded meeting, stressed the technical and scientific contribution that FAO could make to the proposed conference and recommended that FAO be ready to provide within available resources any necessary support to the conference pursuant to a request from the United Nations.

7. Pursuant to operative paragraph 11 of the draft resolution, other specialized agencies, as well as regional and subregional fisheries organizations, would also be requested to contribute with relevant scientific and technical studies and reports and to organize regional and subregional technical meetings. Non-governmental organizations would contribute within their areas of expertise. The secretariat would take all necessary steps to ensure cooperation with the organizations concerned and would organize and coordinate such contributions. The secretariat would assist in regional and subregional meetings, as requested.

8. In accordance with operative paragraph 9 of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would open and administer a trust fund for the participation of developing countries in the conference and address an appeal to Governments and regional economic integration organizations to contribute to the fund.

D. Modifications required in the approved programme of work

9. Should the General Assembly approve the requests contained in the draft resolution, the following output would be added to the citation of activities initially programmed under section 10 of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, subprogramme 1 (Promoting uniform and consistent application of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and providing advice and information to States), activity 2 (Parliamentary services):

Substantive services: Substantive servicing of two sessions of the conference on straddling and highly migratory fish stocks.

E. Additional requirements at full cost

10. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, it is estimated that additional requirements would arise in the amount of $1,048,800, as summarized below.

		$	$
A.	Conference servicing	854 200	854 200
B.	Other requirements		
	General temporary assistance	127 800	
	Travel of staff	21 000	
	Travel of representatives	18 000	
	Public information	27 800	
	Total, other requirements		194 600
	GRAND TOTAL		1 048 800

1. Conference servicing

11. In accordance with operative paragraphs 5 and 7 of the draft resolution, the conference would hold an organizational session for five days in April 1993 and a substantive session for 15 days in July 1993, both at United Nations Headquarters. It is assumed that interpretation and translation services would be required in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

12. For the organizational session, it is assumed that the conference would require interpretation and other meeting services for 10 meetings and that there would be three pre-session documents (50 pages), two in-session documents (50 pages) and two post-session documents (40 pages).

13. For the substantive session, it is assumed that the conference would require interpretation in the six languages of the conference and other meeting services for 30 meetings and that there would be five pre-session documents (300 pages), three in-session documents (80 pages) and three post-session documents (100 pages).

14. Based on the above assumptions, the full cost of conference servicing is estimated at $854,200, as follows:

	$	$
April 1993, five-day session		
Pre-session documentation (50 pages, 3 documents: A,C,E,F,R,S)	51 500	
Meeting servicing (10 meetings, interpretation: A,C,E,F,R,S)	58 200	
In-session documentation (50 pages, 2 documents: A,C,E,F,R,S)	50 700	
Post-session documentation (40 pages, 2 documents: A,C,E,F,R,S)	40 700	
Total		201 100
July 1993, three-week session		
Pre-session documentation (300 pages, 5 documents: A,C,E,F,R,S)	297 300	
Meeting servicing (30 meetings, interpretation: A,C,E,F,R,S)	174 700	
In-session documentation (80 pages, 3 documents: A,C,E,F,R,S)	80 900	
Post-session documentation (100 pages, 3 documents: A,C,E,F,R,S)	100 200	
Total		653 100
TOTAL TWO SESSIONS		854 200

2. Substantive support

15. Substantive support for the conference would be provided by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs. General temporary assistance would be required for the supervision and coordination of the substantive preparations for the conference, including the organizational aspects, the preparation of documentation, inter-agency coordination and liaison with Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and regional and subregional fisheries organizations. It is estimated that temporary assistance would be required for six months at the D-1 level, P-3 level and General Service (Other) level, the cost of which would amount to $127,800.

16. Additional requirements would also arise in respect of travel to assist in the organization and conduct of six technical meetings at the regional and subregional levels, the total cost of which is estimated at $21,000.

3. Travel of representatives

17. Additional costs of $18,000 would arise for travel and subsistence of representatives of national liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3280 (XXIX) of 10 December 1974. In that resolution, the General Assembly decided to invite as observers representatives of the national liberation movements recognized by OAU to participate in conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations which related to their countries, and requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with OAU, to ensure that the necessary arrangements were made for their effective participation, including the requisite financial provisions.

4. Public information

18. The full cost of providing press coverage, including the preparation of press releases, in both English and French is estimated at $27,800. This amount would cover the cost of temporary assistance for four work-months at the P-3 level and two work-months at the General Service (Other) level.

F. Potential for absorption

1. Conference servicing

19. The estimates of conference-servicing costs ($854,200) are based on the theoretical assumption that no part of the conference-servicing costs requirements would be met from within the permanent conference-servicing capacity under section 41 of the programme budget, and that additional resources would be required for temporary assistance for meetings. The extent to which the Organization's permanent capacity needs to be supplemented by

temporary assistance resources can be determined only in the light of the calendar of conferences for 1992-1993. However, as indicated in paragraph 32.4 of the programme budget, the level of resources for temporary assistance for meetings in 1992-1993 was estimated on the basis of previous experience to accommodate not only meetings known at the time of the budget preparation but also meetings that would be authorized subsequently, provided that the number and distribution of meetings and conferences in the biennium 1992-1993 are consistent with the pattern of meetings in past years. On that basis, it is estimated that no additional resources would be required under section 41 of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

2. Other requirements

20. It is expected that savings in the amount of $188,200 will arise under section 10 and proposed section 38 of the programme budget for 1992-1993 as a result of the shortening of the sessions of the Preparatory Commission for the International Sea-Bed Authority and the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea during that biennium. To date the Preparatory Commission has decided to reduce the duration of its sessions in 1992-1993 by a total of four weeks, and the related resources for travel of staff ($104,000), rental of conference facilities ($56,400) and public information ($27,800) could thus be redeployed to provide resources for the proposed conference.

21. In addition, provision has been made in the programme budget for 1992-1993 for the travel of staff to intergovernmental conferences and meetings of regional bodies, with a view to providing substantive support and maintaining a consistent approach to the Convention on the Law of the Sea. It would thus be possible to absorb requirements amounting to $6,400 for travel of staff to regional meetings.

22. Consequently, it would be possible to absorb the additional requirements of $194,600 indicated in paragraph 10 above within the overall level of resources initially approved under section 10 of the programme budget for 1992-1993.

G. Voluntary fund

23. By operative paragraph 9 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would establish a voluntary fund for the purpose of assisting developing States, especially those most concerned by the subject-matter of the conference, in particular the least developed countries, to participate fully and effectively in the conference and invite Governments and regional economic integration organizations to contribute to the trust fund.

24. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, it would authorize an exception to the general principle that only members of United Nations organs serving in their personal capacity should be reimbursed for travel expenses.

25. For the purpose of administering the trust fund, it is assumed that, subject to the availability of funds, travel to each session of the conference would be paid, upon request, in respect of one representative of each State falling under the provisions of operative paragraph 9 of the draft resolution. It is further assumed that the countries most concerned by the subject-matter would be coastal and island States with an established or potential ocean fishery sector and States in the exclusive economic zones of which straddling and highly migratory stocks are known to exist. The Secretary-General would respond to requests for assistance in the order in which they are received.

H. Summary

26. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.62, no additional appropriation would be required under section 38 or 41 of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/45/6/Rev.1), vol. II.

2/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/46/6/Rev.1), vol. I.